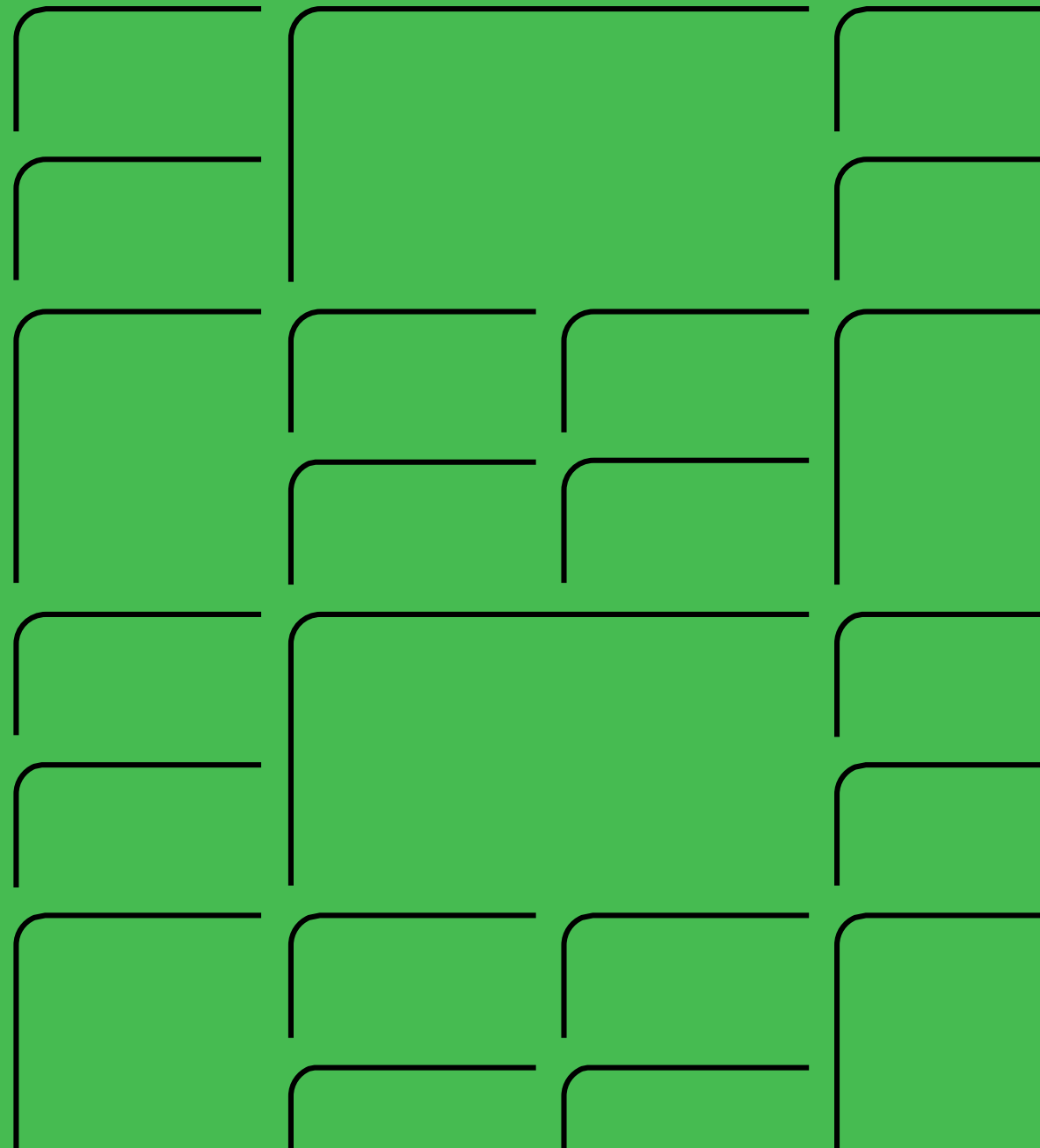


UK 2025 pay gap report



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FRESHFIELDS



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Understanding the pay gap



What is pay gap reporting?

A pay gap shows the difference at a point in time in the average pay between two groups in a workforce (eg, men and women), regardless of job role or seniority.

How is it different to equal pay?

Equal pay deals with any pay differences between men and women who carry out equal work. Equal pay legislation is specific to gender and makes it unlawful to pay women less than men where they carry out equal work (ie, like work, work rated as equivalent or work of equal value) unless there is a material reason not related to gender. Other discrimination legislation makes it unlawful to pay someone less because of their race or ethnic origin. Other characteristics are also protected, including disability and sexual orientation.

Who in the firm (UK) is included in the data?

As well as reporting the gender pay gap data for our UK staff (ie, employees of Freshfields Service Company), we are, as before, voluntarily reporting our overall pay gap data for Freshfields Service Company and Freshfields LLP (both UK entities) and reporting separately for the LLP. Our overall pay gap report includes data from both our Freshfields Service Company and Freshfields LLP, including all UK partners, members, consultants and employees. Partners do not have to be included in statutory declarations as partners are not employees. However, we have included our UK partners in this report to offer a comprehensive picture.

UK pay gap report



We are committed to inclusion across all dimensions of our organisational culture and continue to report on UK pay gaps across gender, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation and socio-economic background. The data in this report is based on voluntary self-identification. The figures have been reviewed, and we believe are accurate in line with UK gender pay gap reporting requirements.

Mark Higgs, Chief Operating Officer, UK & Ireland | Mark Sansom, London & Dublin Managing Partner | Helen Ouseley, Global Head of Culture & Community

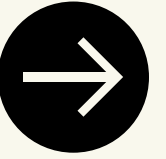
Actions enabling change

Our commitment to inclusion and equality remains central to how we work. We know that meaningful progress takes time, and we continue to take proportionate steps to ensure we provide a workplace where everyone can belong, engage and excel. Below, we highlight examples from our UK initiatives that are helping to drive this change.

- Expanded our UK policy to allow up to five days paid Carers or Dependents Leave
- Hosted an in-person Inclusion Summit with 90+ attendees from 21 different offices
- Hired a Digital Accessibility Lead at the firm
- Launched resources for our people including a Global Menopause Hub, 'Navigating Challenging Times' toolkit and an 'Accessibility Tips' campaign
- Invested in The Bridge Group cross-firm social mobility research
- Ensured cultural and faith dates of importance such as Diwali, Lunar New Year, Ramadan, Rosh Hashanah and Lent were marked through internal and external communications and celebrations
- Continued our engagement in cross-firm mentoring programmes for UK colleagues such as Mission Include and reverse mentoring to encourage a sense of belonging
- Our +10 employee networks continue to drive engagement, and inform and shape our action planning
- Continued our award-winning programmes focused on access to the profession, including our Aspiring Professionals programme and the Stephen Lawrence Scholarship scheme
- Expanded our recruitment efforts by implementing a new recruitment process and reach a wider pool of talent through GTI outreach events
- Partnerships with Rare Recruitment supported high-potential candidates, and collaboration with the 93% Club, helped improved access to the legal profession for state-educated students
- Expanded our talent offerings, including Gold Sponsorship and attendance of the Black Counsel Forum and joining the LLP programme for our LGBT+ community to give our colleagues opportunities to thrive
- Held a number of internal and client facing events throughout the year to promote belonging and engagement, including Black History Month, Social Mobility week, International Women's Day, Pride and International Day of Persons with Disabilities
- Hosted industry leading events such as Business Disability Smart Awards, Female Lawyer Networking Breakfast, Social Mobility in Law Executive group and cross-firm collaborations with Legal Core and Asian Legal Connect
- Recognition of our efforts to ensure equality and inclusion based on data and insights including Stonewall Global Employer – Silver Award and Top 15 listing in the Social Mobility Employer Index

To find out more about our Inclusion work, please read our [2025 Responsible Business Report](#).

Gender pay gap results



Overall gender pay gap



Understanding the numbers

Our overall mean gender pay gap has slightly increased this year, the overall median gap has decreased more significantly. Our pay gaps are predominately driven by the distribution of colleagues across different roles and levels of seniority.

In the last few years, we have promoted more women into the partnership in the UK. Our structure means that those who have served in the partnership longer are typically more highly remunerated.

The mean gender pay gap for partners is -1.0 per cent in favour of women this year, and the median gap has reduced significantly to 8.3 per cent.

For context, at the snapshot date 32 per cent of partners in the UK were women, an increase of one per cent from last year.

Our partner data only references pay data as partners do not have a bonus plan equivalent to employees.

Gender is referenced in binary terms of men and women throughout this report. We recognise that people are non-binary or gender non-conforming, too, although this will not be represented by this breakdown.

Gender pay gap including partners

	2023	2024	2025
Difference in mean hourly rate of pay	53.5%	51.4%	51.9%
Difference in median hourly rate of pay	46.1%	48.0%	40.7%

Gender pay gap for partners

(covering LLP members and consultants held out as partners)

	2023	2024	2025
Difference in mean hourly rate of pay	15.3%	10.7%	-1.0%
Difference in median hourly rate of pay	24.1%	26.7%	8.3%

Gender pay gap for employees



Understanding the numbers

The reduction in both the mean and median gender pay gaps is primarily driven by shifts within the third and upper pay quartiles, where we've observed a notable decrease in the gaps (see page 8). These quartiles largely comprise our Associate population, with some senior business services roles. Associate pay is determined by a lockstep model—where tenure directly influences remuneration. This year, the proportion of female Associates has increased to 57 per cent, up from 54 per cent last year, contributing to the overall improvement.

The bonus gaps have increased this year due to different individual performance outcomes across seniority levels. While there has been an overall increase in the proportion of employees receiving a bonus, this has been largely driven by the Business Services population, where more colleagues received a bonus compared to last year.

Gender pay and bonus pay gaps

	2023	2024	2025
Difference in mean hourly rate of pay	12.0%	13.7%	10.3%
Difference in median hourly rate of pay	27.0%	31.2%	21.6%
Difference in mean bonus pay	33.1%	37.5%	40.0%
Difference in median bonus pay	18.2%	36.3%	44.0%

Proportion of women and men employees who received bonus pay

	2023	2024	2025
Women	73.6%	68.5%	71.3%
Men	70.1%	63.7%	71.8%

The numbers above reflect all UK employees of Freshfields Service Company, a subsidiary of Freshfields LLP, which includes employees in both our London and Manchester offices.

Gender pay gap for employees

Quartile data



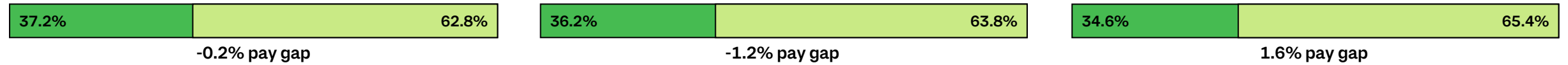
2023

2024

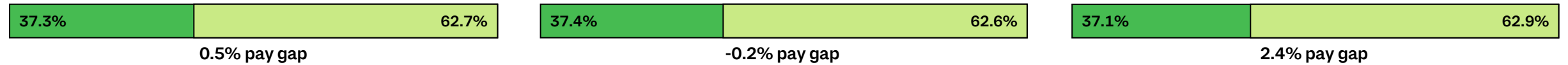
2025

Men
Women

Min to 1st quartile (Q1)



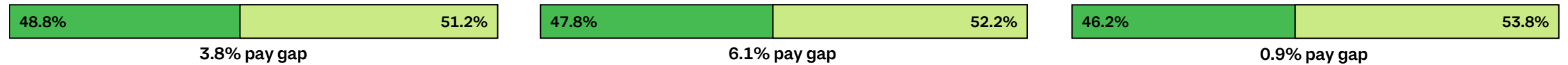
1st quartile to median (Q2)



Median to upper quartile (Q3)



Upper quartile to max (Q4)



Understanding the numbers

The pay gap for Q1, 2 and 4 is in favour of men while Q3 favours women. The pay gap in Q4 has significantly decreased to 0.9 per cent. The overall headcount for FSC employees has increased, which has resulted in a shift in representation within the different quartiles. The percent of female colleagues in each quartile has increased, in part as the new hires were 61 per cent female. We've seen more women promoted this year, particularly at the Associate level given their level and progression through the career milestones.

Gender pay gap for trainees and associates



Understanding the numbers

The mean gender pay gap among associates and trainees have decreased this year while the median gender pay gap has increased to 2.5 per cent.

The strong pipeline of women joining as trainees over the past few years and the number of trainees overall have contributed to the decrease of the mean gap. The median gap has increased due to changes in the distribution of colleagues across levels.

Mean and median bonus gaps have also reduced, in part due to a larger proportion of female associates' strong performance.

Gender pay and bonus pay gaps

	2023	2024	2025
Difference in mean hourly rate of pay	4.0%	8.9%	2.0%
Difference in median hourly rate of pay	0.0%	0.0%	2.5%
Difference in mean bonus pay*	12.6%	24.8%	13.2%
Difference in median bonus pay*	38.3%	31.7%	17.8%

FTE bonus gap as a percentage of FTE salary

	2023	2024	2025
Difference in mean bonus pay	8.6%	20.4%	12.4%
Difference in median bonus pay	34.7%	25.9%	18.9%

Gender pay gap for business services



Understanding the numbers

The mean and median pay gap for business services have both increased this year. There are currently more women than men in business services but the pay gaps are driven in part by the proportion of men currently in higher paying roles.

As seen on previous slides, pay gaps have increased in lower quartiles, which are predominantly Business Services roles.

As it was last year, the mean bonus pay gap is driven by a small number of men within this group whose bonuses impact the overall average.

The FTE mean bonus gap has increased. The median bonus pay gap has increased in part due to the distribution of those working part time across different roles and levels.

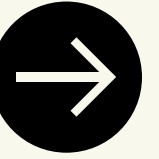
Gender pay and bonus pay gaps

	2023	2024	2025
Difference in mean hourly rate of pay	9.6%	9.3%	13.9%
Difference in median hourly rate of pay	0.0%	2.8%	8.8%
Difference in mean bonus pay	42.9%	23.6%	57.6%
Difference in median bonus pay	14.1%	15.4%	16.7%

FTE bonus gap as a percentage of FTE salary

	2023	2024	2025
Difference in mean bonus pay	40.8%	20.4%	54.9%
Difference in median bonus pay	2.4%	9.9%	14.5%

Ethnicity pay gap results



Overall ethnicity pay gap



Understanding the numbers

We recognise the limitations of reporting on multiple ethnic groups together, and the differences across and within these groups. However, given the size of the populations, and for consistency, we are reporting on all ethnic minority groups collectively, as we have previously.

For context, 26 per cent of our partners and employee population in the UK self-identified as being part of a minority ethnic group at the reporting snapshot window (as a percentage of those who disclosed their ethnicity).

Our ethnicity pay gap data comes solely from individuals who voluntarily choose to share their data with us. For context, our response rate this year was 86 per cent. By continuing to encourage self-reporting through our Count Me In campaign we are seeking to increase this.

The mean pay gap has slightly decreased this year, while the overall median pay gap has decreased more significantly. The pay gap continues to be driven by the relatively small number of partners who identify as from an ethnic minority group, and higher representation of ethnic minorities in more junior roles.

The partner pay gap reduced again this year driven by increasing representation of ethnic minority partners in the partnership.

Where partners are included we have only referenced pay data for the UK as partners do not have an equivalent bonus plan when compared to employees.

Understanding the numbers Ethnicity pay gap including partners

	2023	2024	2025
Difference in mean hourly rate of pay	56.1%*	56.3%	54.1%
Difference in median hourly rate of pay	24.8%*	34.8%	21.1%

Ethnicity pay gap for partners

	2023	2024	2025
Difference in mean hourly rate of pay	25.9%*	22.2%	15.1%
Difference in median hourly rate of pay	39.9%*	33.3%	13.5%

Our ethnicity pay reporting uses the same overall methodology as our gender pay report.

Ethnicity pay gap for employees



Understanding the numbers

The mean and median ethnicity pay gaps have decreased this year in comparison to last year. This is driven by a number of factors including distribution of roles and a higher proportion of ethnic minority employees in more senior roles.

The mean and median bonus pay gaps have increased this year driven by several factors including legal services bonus outcomes and a small population of senior Business Services professionals.

The difference in pay gaps decreased this year as a higher proportion of ethnic minority colleagues received a bonus.

Ethnicity pay and bonus pay gaps for employees

	2023	2024	2025
Difference in mean hourly rate of pay	7.3%	10.8%	8.5%
Difference in median hourly rate of pay	5.8%	22.1%	14.1%
Difference in mean bonus pay	30.0%	14.8%	26.9%
Difference in median bonus pay	15.7%	13.4%	20.6%

Proportion of employees who received bonus pay

	2023	2024	2025
White	79.5%	73.8%	76.7%
Ethnic minority	62.6%	57.8%	67.6%

Ethnicity pay gap for employees

Quartile data



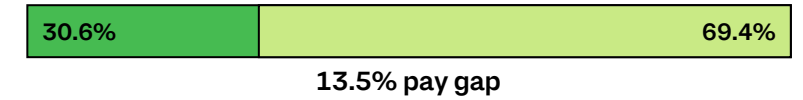
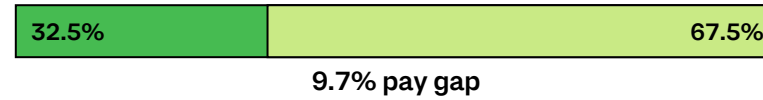
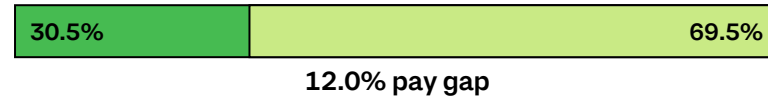
2023

2024

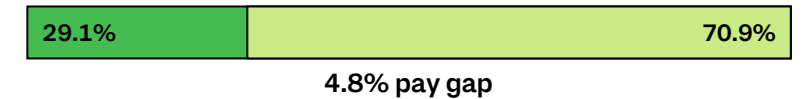
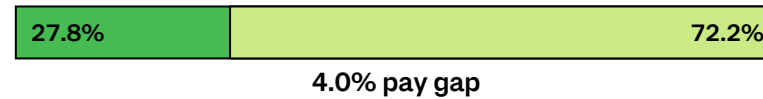
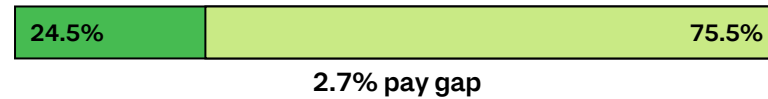
2025

■ Ethnic minority
■ White

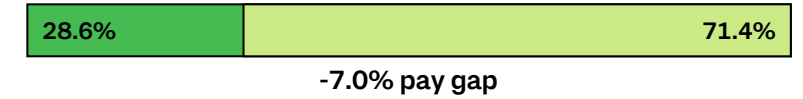
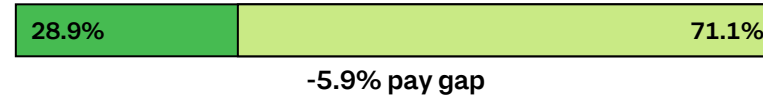
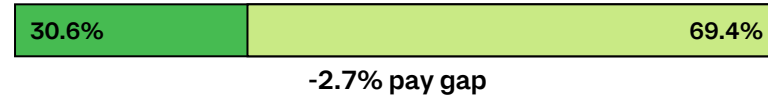
Min to 1st quartile (Q1)



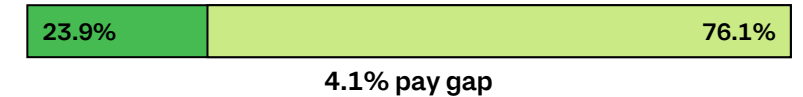
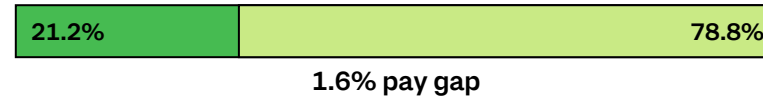
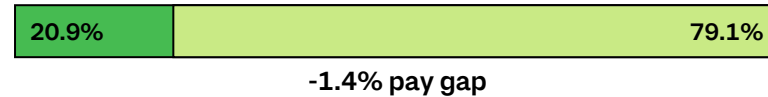
1st quartile to median (Q2)



Median to upper quartile (Q3)



Upper quartile to max (Q4)

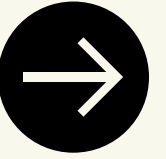


Understanding the numbers

We have seen an increase in the pay gaps within Q1, Q2 and Q4 in favour of white colleagues and in Q3 in favour of ethnic minority colleagues.

The pay gaps within the quartiles are driven by the distribution of employees across the groups. Q1 pay gap increased due to white colleagues in more senior roles disclosing their data.

Disability pay gap results



Disability pay gap for employees and partners



Understanding the numbers

Eleven per cent of our partner and employee population identified as disabled at the reporting snapshot window (as a percentage of those who choose to disclose).

Our self-reporting response rate slightly decreased to 59 per cent this year and we continue to encourage colleagues to share their data if they feel comfortable so we can ensure our reporting is as accurate as possible.

Given the size of the population, changes to those who disclosed can have a significant impact on pay gaps and can make meaningful comparison of the data difficult.

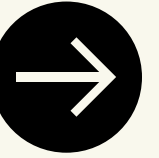
The mean and median pay gaps have decreased this year.

Disability pay gaps including partners

	2023	2024	2025
Difference in mean hourly rate of pay	70.8%*	68.3%	50.6%
Difference in median hourly rate of pay	55.2%*	35.7%	25.6%

Our disability pay reporting uses the same overall methodology as our gender pay report.

Sexual orientation
pay gap for employees
and partners



Sexual orientation pay gap for employees and partners



Understanding the numbers

Eleven per cent of our partner and employee population in the UK identified as LGBTQ+ at the reporting snapshot window (as a percentage of those who choose to disclose). For context, our response rate was 80 per cent.

There has been an increase in the mean pay gap, while the median pay gap decreased.

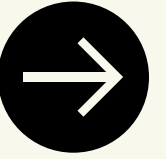
The decrease in the median pay gap is driven by the change in distribution of roles with an increase in LGBTQ+ employees moving up the associate pay scale. The increase in mean pay gap is driven by the increased disclosure and junior associate population. This gap should gradually reduce over time.

Sexual orientation pay gaps including partners

	2023	2024	2025
Difference in mean hourly rate of pay	46.0%*	41.5%	45.7%
Difference in median hourly rate of pay	45.0%*	38.9%	28.2%

Our sexual orientation pay reporting uses the same overall methodology as our gender pay report.

Social mobility pay gap results



Social mobility pay gap for employees and partners



Socio-economic background pay gaps including partners

	2023			2024			2025		
	Intermediate v professional	Lower socio-economic v professional	Intermediate v lower socio-economic	Intermediate v professional	Lower socio-economic v professional	Intermediate v lower socio-economic	Intermediate v professional	Lower socio-economic v professional	Intermediate v lower socio-economic
Difference in mean hourly rate of pay	29.6%	38.5%	12.7%	27.7%	35.9%	11.4%	30.6%	37.7%	10.3%
Difference in median hourly rate of pay	55.2%	50.6%	-10.3%	52.4%	52.0%	-0.9%	57.9%	58.3%	0.9%

Understanding the numbers

We have measured socio-economic background by using parental occupation at age 14. For context, our disclosure rate was 58 per cent for professional, intermediate and lower socio-economic background responses.

We have analysed the pay gap between three groups: professional, intermediate and lower socio-economic background.

Pay gap analysis across professional, intermediate, and lower socio-economic groups shows a slight increase in mean and median gaps for most comparisons, except mean for intermediate vs lower, which decreased.

The decrease between intermediate and lower socio-economic groups is influenced by a rise in trainee representation from lower socio-economic backgrounds.

Increases in gaps between professional vs lower/intermediate groups are driven by the fact

that the majority of colleagues identifying as from a professional background are partners and associates.

Our socio-economic background pay reporting uses the same overall methodology as our gender pay report.

Data is gathered by colleagues choosing to answer the question ‘Thinking back to when you were aged about 14, which best describes the sort of work the main/highest income earner in your household did in their main job?’

Some general examples of the occupations that fall into each category are:

- professional background: teacher, solicitor, accountant;
- intermediate background: secretary, clerical worker, nursery nurse; and
- lower socio-economic background: plumber, gardener, postal worker.

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